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CO-OPERATION BETWEEN LIBRARIES AND SCHOOLS—THE NEED IN CHICAGO.

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The public library as an institution has had a growth in its function within the last few years, and is fast becoming a great civic and educational force. It not only responds as of old to the needs of cultured people by handing books over a counter, but it is aggressive in its policy, and is going out to all classes by co-operating with clubs and societies, by sending books to places of recreation and public amusement, by including music and pictures in its circulating departments, by holding art exhibits, by giving study and reading courses, and by doing away with time limits and fines in books. It is not only relieving the overburdened school with its graded reading lists, its school bulletins and traveling libraries, but it is working directly with the children through its children's rooms with their specially trained attendants, with its story hours, and in the slums, with its library missionaries.

One of the causes of ill-feeling, sin, and crime in this world is the poverty of interests. There is too much absorption in the petty and trivial, and things are not seen in their proper perspective. Human ideals and the beauty of the past disintegrates, unless the institutions which conserve them are alive and aggressive.. Books unlock the treasures of the past, and give to us the wisdom of the ages and the ennobling thoughts of great personalities. What culture comes from a thorough knowledge of the works of even one great poet, what inspiration from reading biography and history, and what practical knowledge and the entrance into the innermost meaning of things from an acquaintance with science and philosophy!

A pretty sight can be seen at any time in Chicago's Black-

stone Library. The low shelves which line the children's room are filled with a thousand or more attractive books. The two low tables are usually surrounded by children. The other day I saw an interesting group about the tables; one boy was studiously, though rather shame-facedly, taking notes from a book on electricity; another was buried in Robinson Crusoe; a third was lost to his surroundings in an account of a seafight; one little girl was attempting the impossible in her eager enjoyment, by trying to see at the same time all the pictures in her own book and in her neighbor's; and two girls in the corner were having quiet spasms of amusement over a book of fun.

In Northampton, Mass., the Forbes Library sends out envelopes of fine photographs. The people, rich and poor, are expected to take them home and use them to decorate their houses. The other day a little boy of nine went to an attendant and asked for some pictures on Greek art. The attendant asked him if he was studying it at school. He said: "Well yes, but I want to have them at home." If more of our boys were inspired to similar desires, the state would have to provide fewer reformatories and other expensive institutions. No community, either from a moral or from an economical standpoint, can afford to do without a good library.

A typical institution of the advanced kind is that in Newark, N. J. This library reaches out and co-operates with clubs and societies, sending ahead for club programs that the right books may be on hand. It has an attractive children's room. It does special work with the firemen. It publishes bulletins, and encourages the public in every way to avail themselves of their library privileges. It sends classroom libraries to the schools, so that every teacher in the city has at her command a library of from twenty to fifty books for the use of the children in her own classroom. It also sends to the schools collections of pictures on nature-study, historical events, foreign countries, architecture and sculpture. (Think of the labor saved by having these collected

once by a public institution instead of hundreds of times by many different teachers, and how much better the result would be!) It also sends out single poems printed on slips in sets of fifty. It reserves books on special topics for the use of the children at the libraries, when notified by the teacher. Many of the schools have special messengers, who leave at night a list of the subjects which the children are studying. The librarians look up suitable material, and have books in readiness for the messengers when they call in the morning. The eighth grade classes are trained in the use of the library. The classes go to the library in sections between nine and ten o'clock in the morning, and as a part of their school work are taught by the librarians how to use the library. The lessons are arranged in this order: (1) how to find books on the shelves from the book numbers; (2) use of the card catalogue; (3) subjects with the card catalogue; (4) Poole's Index.

The spirit of the new library is well represented by the Boston Public Library. The teachers are invited to hold their classes in the branch libraries. When a request is sent in, space and books are reserved for the purpose. The teachers and children are cordially invited and even urged to come; and that they may come, the library does away with all possible red tape. The surroundings are beautiful, the service perfect. No need, from the most trivial one of the youngest child to the most serious, is passed by without due attention. There is inspiration and culture in the very atmosphere and spirit of the place, and the path to learning is made easy and attractive.

The Newark type of work is done on a varying scale in Buffalo, N. Y.; Springfield, Mass.; Cambridge, Mass.; Hartford, Conn.; Pittsburg, Pa.; Cleveland, Ohio; Minneapolis, Minn.; Indianapolis, Ind.; Milwaukee, Wis.; St. Louis, Mo.; Evanston, Ill.; and in many other cities.

The common method of co-operating with the schools in this system is to employ trained attendants to study the needs of the schools, to furnish from time to time graded

lists of books, to publish frequent school bulletins, to inspire the children to right reading by sending to the schools gifted story-tellers, but best of all by sending to each classroom from twenty to fifty books. These are left in the school rooms varying lengths of time—in Milwaukee eight weeks in many places five months, in some a year. The libraries in almost all of these cases provide for the transportation of the books, furnishing cases which fold and lock like trunks, but open into bookshelves.

You observe that the St. Louis Library is among the ranks of the advanced libraries. It not only furnishes classroom libraries, for which we in Chicago would be grateful, but it takes charge of the supplementary reading for the city, sending out books in sets for periods of thirty days. The old story of the two frogs in a milk can would have had to be told the other way around if the frogs had been library frogs. It was the St. Louis frog that made for himself a pat of butter upon which to float. The Chicago frog was drowned!

The chief advantages of the Buffalo-Newark system are (1) There is economy in it. No books are put away on top shelves because ill-adapted to the class that happens to have them, and the books are kept in repair. (2) The books are better selected than they can be by the individual teacher. Buffalo has two expert assistants, who devote themselves to the school work, spending their time visiting the schools and looking into the problem.

Conditions in smaller communities seem more favorable for the development of good libraries. Small cities all about us have finer facilities than we have in Chicago. New York, however, must have problems similar to our own. The public library there is active for the benefit of the schools, but the board of education furnishes the school-rooms with libraries. It maintains a bureau of libraries, which has this feature in charge. Three-fourths of the classrooms in the 484 public schools in New York have been furnished with permanent libraries of from thirty to fifty

books, or 450,250 volumes in all. The circulation last fall term averaged about eight times per book. This is the sixth largest library in the country. It is operated with no expense but the cost of the books. The bureau of libraries also furnishes the schools with topical and reference lists.

The public library in New York in the meantime furnishes traveling libraries to schools as well as to recreation parks, playgrounds, etc., on any reliable person's guarantee. The expense of transportation is sometimes borne by the library, and sometimes by guarantors. It has fifty-five deposit stations in the public schools. It has a special attendant in each one of its thirty-four branch libraries, whose business it is to keep in touch with the teachers and the children. Chicago has not one. This attendant follows the course of study and monthly plans for teachers, and sends bulletins to the schools for the use of the children. These are posted on bulletin boards provided for the purpose by the board of education, and the result is that thousands of children flock to the sub-stations and avail themselves of the reference books there. The public library furnishes an unlimited number of books to the teacher for her own use. These may be kept six months on monthly renewals. Furthermore, when a teacher indorses a child's card, she is not held financially responsible for losses or fines.

The system in use in Indianapolis most resembles the one which Chicago has unsuccessfully tried. The library furnishes the schoolrooms with fifty books each. These are delivered by the school wagons. Such care has been taken that the total loss for the last ten years has been twelve books. Two of these are about to be recovered! Teachers have special cards upon which they can draw six books. The Chicago Public Library allows thirty books to a school to be delivered by the board of education supply wagons. That is the plan, but the library has not felt that it could carry it out, partly because the books have not always been well cared for by the schools, but more because the means of transportation has not been a convenient

one. Indianapolis has been successful with the plan. Moreover, Indianapolis has several deposit stations in the outlying schools, and fifty per cent of its work is for the teachers and the children. Story hours are held by a gifted attendant, who goes out three or four times a week to the fifth, sixth, and seventh grades in the schools.

Librarians everywhere say that the work with the children is made valuable when the schools co-operate with the libraries and direct the reading. The problem in Chicago is how to bring about a co-operation between schools and libraries, and put our system on a par with work done elsewhere. What can be done to bring library privileges to over two hundred and fifty schools?

The necessity of adequate library facilities in a community composed of a heterogeneous foreign population is three-fold. In the first place, there is the moral need of bringing the children not only to a consciousness of the seven cardinal virtues through contact with good literature, but to a clear understanding of the American ideal of liberty and service in contrast with that of license and graft. The latter is obtained in reading history and such biographies as that of Abraham Lincoln. In the second place, there is the necessity of forming the reading habit at the reading age of fourth and fifth grade to give those of foreign parentage in particular command of English. Many of our pupils do not pursue a higher education from their inability either to obtain or to give the thought from the printed page. In the third place, there is the necessity for more books to aid the scholarship of the schools. It is making bricks without straw to ask teachers, in these days of laboratory and library methods, to educate their pupils in history, literature, science and mathematics, and not put at their command a variety of books. Many, if not all, teachers here are greatly hampered in this way.

Several of the Chicago schools have, by dint of a great deal of hard labor and self-sacrifice, got together large libraries, which do them great credit. But we all know that

there is a great poverty of books in many schools, and those possessed are not properly used. In fact, the school library problem has scarcely been touched in our city. A year or two ago Massachusetts had but two small hamlets that were not supplied with libraries. There is a town among the Berkshires which consists of two houses, a church, and a cemetery, and yet the circulation of its library reached a thousand volumes the first year. South Chicago has over 60,000 people within its limits. Its library privileges consist of one small substation in the rear of a flower store.

What Chicago should have is many branch reading-rooms, such as the Blackstone Library, and some way of furnishing the class-rooms with libraries of suitable books. The substations should be furnished with children's rooms, with trained attendants to help the children look up references, and inspire them to read good literature. The surroundings should be refined and attractive, story hours should be held, and there should be low, open shelves filled with books, puzzles, and games. The substations, if they could not be connected with every school, should be so situated that they could be used by a number of schools. The classroom libraries should contain fifty carefully selected books in attractive binding, picture-books for the youngest children, stories of adventure, history and literature, and good reference books for the older ones. The atmosphere of our libraries should be such that the self-conscious, shy students are not discouraged in their endeavors to use the libraries, but such helpfulness should prevail that the children all feel that the libraries are theirs for a wise and considerate use.

There are some movements on foot to bring about better conditions here in Chicago. Mr. Hosis, of the Normal School, has a new library list for the schools in preparation. The Public Library was to have opened three new branch libraries in the recreation parks the first of November. It is bending its energies toward perfecting its substations and is preparing new reading lists. The library has seventy

substations, and is of course an expensive institution to run. We all hope, however, that the need of enlarging its work with the public schools will some time be so apparent to the public and to the library that means will be forthcoming and the schools supplied with books. Many libraries use a great deal of their energy and means in providing mediocre literature demanded by the public. It is possible that if the need of the schools was made apparent, some less deserving work of the library could be somewhat abridged and this work substituted for it. One of the first steps toward a proper co-operation between the schools and library would be a new rule governing the transportation of books to the schools. Although the library has not sufficient books to meet the demand which would come from the schools, the distribution of even twenty or thirty books to a school would be a movement from which great things might grow.